241 when planted in large quantities. The southern zone of al-Qasr
407 is best suited for these crops, and the tractor is necessary
434 for a successful crop.
433

407 Tractors are rented through the cooperative society.
474 Local cooperative officers are responsible for seeing that all
[427] members share in the use of the tractor. But, in fact, officers
and their closer relatives monopolize the tractors. The gov-
[654] ernment has allotted to the al-Qasr cooperative five tractors.
They feel that it would jeopardize the whole program of economic
reform if they were to dictate the way in which the tractors
407 are to be used. Consequently, the tractor, like the rations
619 of foodstuffs, has become a pawn in tribal power plays. In
474 one case, not in al-Qasr, a tractor-driver who was a member of
the 'Ali Abyad tribe insisted that members of the 'Ali Ahmar
tribe pay him a 50 piaster "tip" to have their fields plowed.
Because of situations such as these, most Bedouins prefer that
cooperative membership coincide with local group membership.
It is better, they say, if the 'Aishaibat of al-Qasr have
their own cooperative because they know how to handle problems
among themselves. The government, during this transitional
period, seems to agree.

407 One reason that tractors are monopolized by a small
group is that there are not enough of the machines to handle
the plowing. Of the five tractors in al-Qasr, seldom were more
than two working simultaneously. Often, this was a result of

156 of them) cater largely to the needs of the lineage in whose
159 territory they are located. They are operated mostly on a
554 credit basis. Lineage members, as debtors, feel gratitude
443 but also, and more importantly, loyalty toward their kinsman
423 and creditor. Hajj 'Ali is the only member of al-Qasr who
472 owns two shops, and the only Bedouin in the whole Western Desert
* [613] who owns three shops. His brother owns a shop in Matruh.
[452] Furthermore, the shop in Sallum is in a strategic position on
156 the Libyan border which, coincidentally or not, is a point
159 for importing, and also smuggling, foreign goods into Egypt.
554 The possession and utilization of foreign products is definitely
443 a status symbol all over Egypt. Hence, the person in this
439 area who can control, however slightly, the distribution of
472 such goods has a lever with which to exact prestige and
favors from the "status group" in al-Qasr who now welcome
these symbols (tobacco, pistols, rifles, radios) and the
bureaucrats of Marsa Matruh who crave them (food goods,
clothing materials, car parts).

156 Besides all this, Hajj 'Ali is involved in a small
159 stone-cutting operation which supplies stones for house
554 building, he cooperates with his three brothers in a well-
[316] cleaning concern, and contracts government heavy equipment
[312] to build earth dams. The material evidence of his status
• [427] is that he is the only man in al-Qasr with two compound-type
[342] houses (one he built thirteen years ago), and the only man
[595] with four wives.